

# Newham residents find innovative ways to green the borough



**The country's first permanent Citizens' Assembly has presented a range of creative ideas to make Newham's green spaces better, and more accessible.**

Newham residents delivered their recommendations to a Council panel at the weekend after engaging with relevant local and national experts, and discussing ideas that shaped their proposals.

Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz, thanked the Citizens' Assembly participants for their 'significant commitment' and participation in the democratic process.

Mayor Fiaz said: "Your involvement and passion is an indication of how special this borough is. I am proud we are enabling new and innovative ways for you have a say about the issues that matter to you the most.

"Your fresh ideas, perspectives and views have provided us with some really exciting ideas to improve our green spaces. By working together, we can secure

our borough's future and ensure we have beautiful, safe green spaces that we can all enjoy.

"This Citizens' Assembly has provided a genuinely meaningful opportunity for Newham's residents to help make the borough a healthier and happier place to live. I look forward to receiving the final report, which my Cabinet and I will consider carefully and respond to in detail as part of my commitment to making Newham Council an open, transparent council which residents can trust."

The permanent Citizens' Assembly forms part of a range of new steps the Council has been taking to extend participatory democracy and give residents a real voice and a say in shaping policy.

The Assembly's recommendations covered of the following themes:

- Steps to make parks and green spaces safer and more inclusive
- Ideas to extend collaboration with the community and local businesses to fund and improve green spaces
- Using digital to get more people developing activities in green spaces
- Protecting and expanding well-designed accessible green spaces
- Rewilding areas and increasing biodiversity to re-connect people with nature
- Maintaining and de-littering green spaces
- Creating facilities that are comfortable and sustainable
- Looking at how proposals can reduce the borough's carbon footprint, to help address climate change

The final proposals will be drawn up over the summer and presented to the Council later in September, and Cabinet will formally respond to the Citizens' Assembly suggestions later in the year.

The topic of 'Greening the Borough' was chosen by residents through an online poll as the first issue they wanted England's first permanent Citizens' Assembly to discuss this summer.

Thirty one per cent chose 'greening the borough', closely followed with 30 per cent selecting 'the 15 minute neighbourhood', which will be addressed by the second Citizens' Assembly in the New Year.

The issue of 15-minute neighbourhoods, which already forms part of the Council's Covid recovery strategy, Towards a better Newham, will look in detail at

how the borough can create vibrant local centres and communities where people can easily work, meet, shop, and access the everyday services they need.

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